TITLE: ERROR ANALYSIS IN WRITINGS OF ESL STUDENTS AT VOCATIONAL INSTITUTES WITHIN MUZAFFARABAD

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Abstract:
The study is a contemplation of errors committed in the domain of formal essay writing by the students of vocational institutions within city of Muzzafarabad. Researchers collected the data from two vocational institutions at the city of Muzaffarabad. For the collection of the data researchers used essay writing task. A total of nineteen respondents participated in the study. For the analysis of the data, the study employs the framework of Corder & Ellis (1975) to classify the errors into different categories. Then the frequency of those errors is examined. The study found that errors of omission were most common among the students. Moreover, other forms of errors like mis-ordering in the spelling, addition, false hypothesis, overgeneralization of a learnt rule, false application of rules are found to be present in students' responses. Moreover, the study supplements with the suggestions which could be considered to resolve those errors in a systematic way.

Keywords: *Error analysis, Interlanguage, Error correction, Second language Acquisition*.

1- Introduction

The study is based on data collected from two vocational institutions within Muzaffarabad, AJ&K. The study identifies the errors committed by the students of those vocational institutions. Moreover, the study classifies the errors into many categories and then seeks for resolution of those errors. Errors committed by the students are documented alongside with remedies for those errors.

1.1.Literature review

Corder (1967) had presented a definition of error as:" Systematic recurrence" of false use of structure or structures that are not acceptable within general norms of a target language. Error analysis is a module of linguistic analysis through which linguists find themselves capable of analyzing errors that are commenced by a language learner. Error analysis gained much prominence in an aftermath of World War II, when the focus on second language acquisition was getting much attention worldwide.

B.F Skinners, J.B. Watson, and Ivan Pavlov's experiments provided a base for understanding the language as a system that is largely governed by habits. At the closing era of 1950s, linguists started thinking languages as mutually different habits, which still share many similarities. This led to development of hypothesis that "Similarities between languages would facilitate Second Language Acquisition (SLA). While, differences would affect language learning in a negative fashion." At the very beginning, Lado (1957) described that language learning might get affected by already acquired language system. And, that two different language systems can be compared

to one another to understand interlingual causes of errors. Lado (1957) had categorized errors into interlingual errors and intralingual errors. As, language was considered as a set of habits by the author. He described that previously learnt habits may have a significant influence upon newly acquired habits. So, he pointed out, that, major source of error in language acquisition is learners' native language system. Especially, in case of 'SLA', where native languages' system might induce positive or negative transfer. Where positive transfer will facilitate the learning and negative transfer will affect language acquisition in a negative manner.

Corder (1967), in his publication "significance of learners' error", for the first time described errors to be a systematic process. Corder (1967) had described that errors are not something, to be considered 'vile'. Rather they ought to be considered as 'red-flags' and they must be undertaken as a warning signal. Errors are systematic in nature and they also indicate that language learning is also a systematic process. It provides a definite suggestion that errors shall be eradicated in a systematic manner. He had also drawn a distinction between 'mistake' and 'error'. He had highlighted that mistakes are something that happens "once in a while" and learner is subconsciously aware of that. On the other hand, errors are something where learner repeats them again and again. Moreover, learner is also not consciously aware of the fact that he is commencing a wrong use of structure.

Selinker (1972) had discussed that major problem in children or adult language is a process, that he nominally called "fossilization". The process occurs when a persons' language development pauses at a certain stage between "interlanguage" (the term was used to refer to a stage of development from first language to target language, that in itself inhabits various stages). So, if certain structure gets fossilized, then there will be an inertia in Language learning.

Richard (2015) had defined error in language as "use of linguistic items, in a way which, according to fluent users of the language, indicate faulty or incomplete learning.

Corder (1973) had the error classified into fallowing categories.

1- Omission: when some grammatical form would be omitted.

2-Addition: Adding a form which might not be allowed by language system.

3- Miss-ordering: Changing the syntactic order of the TL(target language)

Corder (1973) had derived errors into three stages. He classified the errors into

a): Pre-systematic: They occur when learner is yet formulating the hypothesis about use of language. Learner is still in the stage of "forming and testing".

b): Systematic stages: These mistakes occur when learner has formulated some rule or rules and he tests them, while using the language.

c) Post-systematic: Post systematic errors happen when learner despite of having learnt true form i.e. after getting enforced with right structures, commit false structures. This type of errors is temporary and instantiated by" once in a while" act.

Richard (1975) had the errors classified into fallowing categories.

1- Overgeneralization: A device of application of previously learnt strategy, to a new place. Where that strategy might not be applicable. E.g:

2-Ignorance of rule restriction: A device of extending the rules, to an area, where they might not be applicable.

3- Incomplete application of rule: When rule is not completely grasped. Rather it is only

partially understood.

4- False concept hypothesis: Those errors, that results from deviation from a regularly provided language rule.

1.2.RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the errors that frequently occur in the formal-writings or essays by students of ESL?
- Which types of error does repeatedly occur in the essays of learners of English, as a second language?
- How can these errors be remedied?

1.3.DELIMITATIONS:

- The problem is delimited to: "Errors committed by ESL students", while learning language within vocational institutes within Muzzafarabad.
- Research area is delimited to vocational institutes within Muzzafarabad.
- Sample size is delimited to: Data collected from nineteen respondents from two institutions.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1.Data Collection:

Researchers have employed the qualitative research design. Whereby, data is being collected in the form of essay writing test. Fifteen students from a vocational institute were selected in this regard.

For data collection firstly, sampling was devised which was designed, keeping in mind the resources and time available. Essay writing was considered to be sampled for analysis of "errors committed during formal pieces of writings. So, a total of "nineteen" samples was collected from two vocational institutes from Muzzafarabad city.
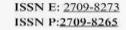
2.2.FRAMEWORK:

Research implies the framework proposed by Corder (1975), which involves fallowing steps for data analysis:

1- Data Collection

2- Identification of errors

3- Classification of errors

4- Quantification of errors

5- Analysis of errors.

6- Remedies for errors.

2.3.Data Analysis:

For the analysis of the data obtained through the test, researchers have used Corder (1975) framework of categorization of the errors. Errors which are found in the data have undergone the thematic analysis on the basis of framework provided by Corder (1975). After identification of errors. These errors are quantified using a frequency wise description of those errors.

3. Discussions

Identification of Different Errors and Categorization of Errors into Different Types:

In this section different types of errors that are being found from the sample would be discussed. It will help in getting good insights of different types of errors that are found in the sample.

3.1.Omission:
Omission happens at two basic levels in formal writings. One is syntactic level and other is morphological level.

A) : Syntactic level:
At syntactic level omission errors occur, when certain "lexical" form is not being used where it must be used. i.e. when helping verb might not be used by the writer.
e.g. i:)Mudasar related to Rathore family.
        Instead of.
    Mudasar **is** related to Rathore family.
ii) He playing cricket very well.
        Instead of.
   He **is** playing cricket very well.

B) : Morphological level:
At morphological level "omission" happens when certain grammatical marker. Like: tense marker is found absent.
E.g. she **teach** us Arabic.
    She teache**s** us Arabic.
These sorts of errors are found very frequent during error analysis of the samples.

3.2.Addition:
This sort of errors happens when a grammatical form is added which is syntactically or grammatically not necessary. These forms are often derogatively used.
e.g.   i:) He **is** always supported me.
            ii:) I **have been visited** my favorite place.
            Instead of.
            I visited my favorite place.
ii): She helps to other people.
Instead of
        She helps other people.

3.3. Misordering:
Misordering happens at two levels. As regular order of conventional structures get changed.

At spellings' level:
        Socre   instead of   score.

Grils   instead of   girls.

e.c.t.   instead of   etc.

At sentence level:
At sentence level position of adverbs are often altered. i.e. instead of placing the adverb after verb. They are often placed before verbs.
e.g. They get **easily** job.
      Instead of
    They get job easily.

3.4. False concept hypothesis:
False concept hypothesis errors happen when a person develops a wrong hypothesis about rule of any language. Learner develops hypothesis at different levels. Usually false concept about a rule is developed when a person for the first time encounters a new structure. I.e. at pre- systematic level.
e.g.
i): She don't miss her class.   (Here, learner may have developed a wrong hypothesis that present tense takes "do" as helping verbs. Without realizing, the exceptional case of third person singular."
ii): She helps to mother. (Here, the learner has probably hypothesized the rule to use an infinitive in a deviant manner. Learner has learnt that infinitive "to" come after a verb. Without realizing that infinitive "to" also come before a verb. And, more essentially, that, infinitive creates a distance between two juxtaposed verbs.)

3.5.Overgeneralization of a rule:
These sorts of errors occur most frequently when a learnt rule is applied beyond its' jurisdictions.
e.g.
He completed **her** diploma.
(Here, the student is using the gender rule of English language in an inappropriate manner. This is an instance of gender rule deviance because of overgeneralization.)
Below, here is provided an instance of overgeneralization of "simple present" tense's rule.
ii) Naemar wins many awards in his football career.
    Instead of.
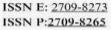 Naemar has won many awards in his football career.

3.6. Incomplete application:
Incomplete application errors happen when a rule is not completely applied to a place where its application is required.
E.g. My teacher name is Uzma.
    Instead of.
  My teacher's name is Uzma.

(Genitive marker is not being used. So, rule is partially applied, not completely.)

Wrong use of conjunctions:

Students often not acquire the right conjunctions for appropriate place.

e.g. My best friend is one **that** name is Kashif Irfan.

Instead of.

My best friend is the one **whose** name is Kashif Irfa

3.7. Wrong use of tense in context:

This sort of errors occurs when students use inappropriate tenses, provided, the demand of the context. And the meaning they want to convey.

E.g. we are enjoying very much.

Instead of,

We **enjoyed** very much. (As, student is narrating an event in his past. But he is using a form of Progressive action in present.)

A table that describes the frequency of errors committed by the students of above-mentioned categories:

Category	Frequency
1-Ommission.	28
2-Addission.	8
3-Misordering.	10
4-False Concept Hypothesis.	11
5-Overgeneralization.	7
6-incomplete application of rules.	8
7-Wrong use of Conjunctions/ Prepositions.	7
8-Wrong use of tense in context.	8

The tabular data reveals that out of total of nineteen samples the types of errors that are mostly founded are "errors of Omission". While errors because of "overgeneralization", "incomplete application" and "wrong use of tense" in context are less common. While errors because of "Misordering" and "Wrong use of tense" are existing at a moderate level.

3.8.Remedies for the errors:

Error remediation process may incorporate fallowing four types:

1- Error correction based on teachers' guidance.
2- Error corrections through group-based activities.
3- Error correction through metacognitive drillings.

Based on teachers' guidance and grouped base activity:

Teacher can act very proactively upon the errors committed by students frequently in the class. And they could immediately provide with the assisting knowledge, which will help students' in eliminating their mistakes.

Teacher can directly take control of the class and supply with the correct structures. Or they can attain this objective by organizing various class-based activities, which would help students in

participating various activity. So, they will have more supplements that could help them re-evaluate their progress.

Fallowing activities may help students getting rid of the errors, they frequently commit..

1- Role Play.
2- Simulations.
3- Fluency games.
4- Vocabulary drills.
5- Description activities.
6- Drilling.
7- Writing exercises with special focus over spellings.

Teacher may have an active or a passive role in these activities but he should keep a keen eye upon the progress of the students. That, whether they are making any significant progress or not.

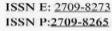### Error correction through meta-cognitive activities:

Students shall not be rigid with their learning. Rather they shall have an open mind for the corrections that would be supplemented to them. Therefore, they must always keep their cognitive system open for re-writing and re-wiring. They shall have an open and curious mind for new information. This behavior will help them acquiring new behaviors, learn new habits, and enhancing their grammatical and linguistic proficiency and fluency.

Limitations:

The study has a very narrow scope because, it does not incorporate a large set of samples. Sample size is kept very small. Because of time limitations and resources' constraints, an extensive study was not possible. The results proposed by study are hard to generalize beyond the vocational institutions from which the data is collected. Mainly, because the sample is collected on a very smaller level. However, studies at larger scales can be conducted.

Conclusions:

There are few errors that are being confounded in the study which fulfill the classification of Corder (1973) and Richard (2015). However, at the orthographic level a different kind of error is being identified, which includes "mis-ordering of spellings". In case, if pedagogical tools and techniques, as suggested in the "Remedy" section, would be implemented, then these errors can be reduced, while fallowing a systematic procedure.

Suggestions:

In order to get a large-scale understanding of the problem. Extensive studies can be done with large sample size chosen out of larger population. Moreover, psychological case studies can be done, in order to identify the causes of these errors. If the psychological or neural causes would be identified, then they can have a follow-up, that would suggest that: how can these problems be eliminated. Moreover, it will help developing a psychological understanding of errors as a systematic abnormality. Case studies can be done on specific students who commit special kinds of errors, which are less frequent but more persistent. It can help those students.

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